

ADULT LEARNERS DROPOUT FROM LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF MDGS AND EFA GOALS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The programme of an adult literacy programme is expected to last for a given number of months. It is usually expected that it is within this duration that the adult learner would possess the requisite domains of learning which could be measured. Unfortunately, due to various reasons best known to adult learners in literacy programmes, they choose to drop out of the programme. This study therefore examined the causes of drop out in adult literacy programme in Gombe state. The 5414 learners who dropped out in the year 2011, served as the population of the study. The sample was 10percent of the population which is 542. The population and sample were drawn from the following local government areas: Shongom, Yamaltu-Deba and Nafada. They were sampled using multi stage and simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. 542 questionnaires were administered and returned. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The result of the study revealed: gender roles of the respondents was responsible for drop out of adult literacy learners from the programmes. In addition, a very high number the respondents agreed that, instructors' incompetence was also responsible for their drop out. Other factors listed were inadequacy of instructional materials and its quality. Four suggestions were proffered thus: building literacy centers and equipping such centers with adequate and appropriate facilities as well as establishment of more female centers.

Key words: drop out, adult learners, literacy programme, implications, EFA, MDG goals

1.0 Introduction

Education in any form (be it formal or non-formal) is a human right that should be accorded to all human beings solely by reason of being human as the benefits of acquiring it must not be overemphasis. It is planned for and run as a programme to humanity geared towards improving their quality of life so as to enable them contributes to national development. According to Otive (2006), the relationship between education (literacy education inclusive) and development is well established such that education is a key index of development. It has been documented that schooling improves productivity, health and reduces negative features of life such as child labour as well as bringing about empowerment. That is why there has been a lot of emphasis particularly in recent times for all citizens of the world to have access to basic education.

In the light of this importance, different international bodies came up with different declarations. Prominent among them is the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) where education was made a right to every human regardless of sex, race, and religion. Others are the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Education For All (EFA) (2000) and recently the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). All these covenants and Declaration attest to the immense value of providing education for all without discrimination at least to the basic level.

Unfortunately, in situations where learners already enrolled in educational programmes drop out of the programme, existing efforts to provide education for all becomes threatened. For some time now, cases of learners drop out of programme and programmes as were with the formal sector the story is not different in the non-formal sector where grown up adults interested in learning literacy skills are forced to drop out for some obvious reasons. It was reported by

Yahaya, (2011) that Adult literacy programmes tend to be heavily populated when they are opened, but often experience relatively low and irregular attendance rates and sometimes disappointing completion examination rates (drop out) due factors such as inadequacy of literacy materials, loss of interest in the programme and seasonal activities undertaken by the adult learners. This phenomenon suggests that a number of factors exists and are responsible for the irregularities in their attendance and drop out before the official duration of the programme duration.

Furthermore, Yahaya (2011) reported that some researchers found unmet needs of some learners while other factors do intervene to limit attendance and subsequently drop out in literacy programme. The researcher explained that sometimes dropout cases may not be a drop out in real sense, for some learners it is because they have gotten what they want. A median daily attendance rate for the five programmes that reported this statistic is 62 percent. was obtained in that study which suggests that many participants often do not attend programme regularly or may have drop out but their names remain in the registers from which completion rates are reported. It is hard to become literate with desultory attendance.

Despite the State and Federal government's effort in designing and staffing adult literacy programmes for addressing cases of illiteracy among adults in Nigeria, many of the enrolled learners ended up dropping out of the class. Cases of drop out have become a matter of concern to educationists interested in promoting literacy education in Nigeria especially among adult persons. It is observed from Annual Report in Yahaya (2011) that most sessions began with good number of learners' enrolment and end with a decline in the number of learners. This is due to cases of drop out. A number of factors are best known to the learners themselves. In Gombe state which was created in the year 1996 from the present Bauchi state, the then region was known for its high man power strength due to the high level of educational attainment by its citizens.

2.0 Adult Literacy Rates

The National Bureau for Statistics literacy survey (2010) put the National adult literacy rate in English Language at 57.9 percent with 65.1 being males and 50.6 being females. While the national adult literacy rate in any language stood at 71.6 percent with males having 79.3 percent and females having 63.7 percent. The rates for males are higher than those of females. The rates are also higher in urban than in the rural areas. Yet as it is popularly said "there is no room without a dust". The present Gombe state is known to have 568,994 illiterates rate (Gombe State, 2011). 56.36percent of the populations are female. This makes the Adult and Non-Formal Education Agency relevant in carrying out its mandate of ensuring reduction if not eradication of illiteracy in the State. This task is often faced with some number of challenges among which is that of drop out of the adult learners from the literacy centers in the state.

The multidimensional benefit of adult literacy education cannot be overemphasized as studies such as This Day Newspaper in 2009, 15th September reported that, high dropout cases has lowered literacy rate in Nigeria. Also Pwoll and Fasokun (2008) reported that, high dropout rate is among the major causes of illiteracy in Nigeria. While transcapus.com (2011) explained that, many Adult literacy programmes failed to produce result due to drop out among other factors. found that, lives of the people concerned got improved, it enhanced parental support for child education, served as means of employment to adult persons in different levels, etc. perhaps the reason for the involvement of International Non- Governmental Organizations in the stride against illiteracy in Nigeria. For instance Action Aid International Nigeria was quoted to have realised the importance of adult literacy in enhancing different forms of education especially if parents appreciate the benefits of education "particularly mothers' appreciation of the benefits of education, and their ability to actually support their children's formal and informal learning processes" (Otive 2006).

Nigeria has expressed a commitment to education, with the belief that overcoming illiteracy and ignorance will form a basis for accelerated national development. However, regardless of the incontrovertible evidence that education is crucial to the development of the community and nation, inequalities in access to education still exists. Millions of poor people and their children are excluded from the processes and outcomes of education (Otive, 2006). Nigeria is a signatory to the 1990 Jomtien Declaration of Education for All (EFA) by the year 2000 and also a member of the group of E-9 Nations committed to the total eradication of illiteracy. In spite of this, the nation's literacy rate was said to be around 57.1percent in the year 2006. Education statistics for 1996 shows that only 14.1 million children are enrolled in primary schools out of the 21 million children of school-going age. The completion rate was 64percent while the rate of transition to junior secondary school was 43.5percent. There is overwhelming evidence that these vital literacy indicators have not improved (SCACEFA in Otive, 2006). The implication of the above happenings is that, rate of the illiterates could increase due to poor enrolment and increasing cases of drop outs in formal schools by youths and the growing children who would be the adults of tomorrow. Given its current scope and efficiency, this type of education probably will not contribute significantly to a 50 percent reduction in adult illiteracy rates by 2015 as stipulated by the

Education for All goals which aims at “achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.” Adult literacy is also essential in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals yet a good number of literacy learner’s drop out of the programme after commencement of programme. It is in this backdrop that this paper strives to find out “what are the causes of adult literacy learners drop out from the programme in Gombe State?”

It was against this background that Government expressed its intention to eradicate illiteracy. To successfully do that, government provided: free, compulsory and universal primary education, free university education and free adult literacy programme. In the same vein, the revised edition of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), spelt out in clear terms the roles of Universal Basic Education that, Basic Education (Adult and Non-Formal Education Agency included) is aimed at equipping individuals with such knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them;

- Live meaningful and fulfilling lives;
- Contribute to the development of the society
- Derive maximum social, economic and cultural benefits from the society; and discharge their civic obligations competently

There are substantial shortcomings in Nigeria’s institutional and personnel capacities for the delivery of a sound basic education for all citizens. There are also wide spread disparities both in quality and access across the nation. Available infrastructural facilities, teaching and learning materials as well as qualified teachers are grossly inadequate (Otiye, 2006). For Nigeria to attain the desired 100 percent national literacy rate, it is imperative that provisions should be made and actions taken to universalize basic education, enthrone a conducive learning environment and improve quality and standards. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme is designed to address these challenges.

Findings from an educational sector analysis carried out in 2006 confirmed the poor state of education in Nigeria CSACEFA in Otiye (2006). The national literacy rate is currently 57 percent while 49 percent of the teaching force is unqualified. There are acute shortages of infrastructure and facilities at all levels. Access to basic education is inhibited by gender issues and socio-cultural beliefs and practices, among other factors. Wide disparities persist in educational standards and learning achievements (Otiye, 2006). He further lamented that, Literacy level in the country has steadily and gradually deteriorated, especially within the 15-24 years of age group. By 1999, the overall literacy rate had declined to 64.1 percent from 71.9 percent in 1991. The trend according to Otiye (2006), have flown in the same direction for male and female members of the 15-24 years of age bracket. Among the male, the rate declined from 81.35 percent in 1991 to 69.8 percent in 1999. The decline among the female was from 62.49 percent to 59.3 percent during the same period. In a review conducted by Abadzi (2003) she found that out of the 32 programmes evaluated, the dropout rate was 22 percent of the enrolled learners.

A study conducted by Action Aid (2003) showed that the reasons why pupils do not go to primary schools in Nigeria include costs of schooling, opportunity costs, illness and hunger, limited economic costs of education and low quality of schooling. This was basically because parents cannot afford paying the cost. In the same vein, many adult persons cannot afford the current cost (forego opportunities among other cost) of education in pursuit of literacy education in the state. In fact the political clamour for free education seems to be a paper work as the adult education sector suffers in adequate funding to implement the free education scheme. Hence learners are asked to buy their instructional materials which become difficult due to the poverty situation among some Nigerians.

Added to the preceding discussions, it was common practice in early literacy campaigns in Nigeria that almost all it requires for an adult learner to learn are provided by the lower tiers of government, which then enhanced enrolment and completion of the literacy programme unlike to day where learners are asked to buy learning materials for themselves and sometimes even contribute some stipend to make a black board for their class; the case which often marginalize and intimidate the poor, who constitute the illiterates in the society. In Malawi for instance, two years after fees were introduced into the school system in the 1980s, enrollment rates fell by over 5 percent. On serious note, it was documented that whenever user fees are abolished, enrollment increases (Otiye 2006). On the other hand he reported that the Tanzanian experience which eliminated fees for primary education in January, 2002 with the support of the World Bank and enrollments increased by as much as 1.5 million children the case which is not different from the adult learners in Gombe state. This is because, it was observed that in those days when agencies were well funded, it do supply literacy programme with adequate instructional materials. Hence, there was high rate of enrolment but the moment when the concept of participatory funding came into play, most learners dropped out as early as the first three to four months of enrolment. A lot of instructors suffered so much to get learners attend the class they enrolled for.

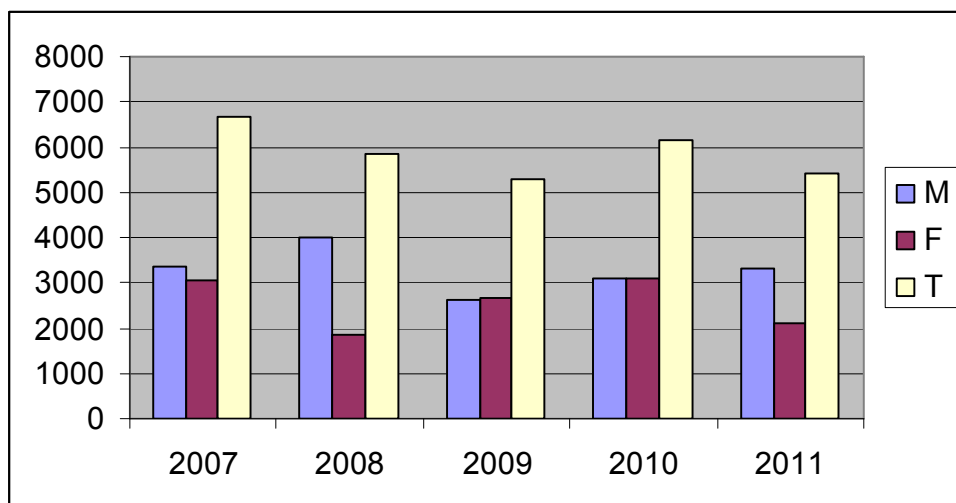
Sometimes it goes to the extent of the instructor using his salaries to buy writing materials for the learners to keep them coming to class.

This was illustrated by Yahaya (2011) in a study of two independent programme, where adequate resource was supplied in one while the other were asked to supply them. At the end of the session, the class supplied with the resources had only 2 learners (i.e. 8percent) who dropped out. But as for the other class without the supply, out of the 25 enrolled, 15 (i.e. 60percent) dropped out of the class due to their involvement in funding their education.

It is interesting to note that when parents find persons who have received good education unable to get employment in the formal sector, they are dissuaded from sending their children to school. Similarly, parents and guardians would be reluctant to send their children and wards to dilapidated school buildings, to be taught by ill-motivated teachers. They would be reluctant to send their children and wards to school if the education that the kids are getting is not in any way relevant to their circumstances, or if there is a danger that they can be abused by teachers or members of the community on their way to school. It was revealed by Yahaya (2011) that, adult learners provided two key reasons for not attending courses for which they have registered. Many learners noted on-going, age-related fatigue and forgetfulness as a key factor for drop out.

An observation carried out on trend of dropout from literacy programme in Gombe state by in Yahaya, (2011) shows that, in 2006, 6,667 learners dropped out before the end of the programme while 5, 831 learners dropped in the year 2007 and the year 2008, 5300 dropped out 2009-6164 learners dropped out the year 2010 had 5414 learners dropped. The table below shows detail statistics of cases of drop out of adult literacy programme across the state.

Chart 1: Drop Out Rate Among Adult Learners in Gombe state:



Source: Adult Non-Formal Education Agency Gombe state 2012.

It is against these basis that this research studied the drop out of adult learners from literacy programmes in Gombe state, Nigeria: implications for achievement of MDGs and EFA goals in Nigeria.

3. Objectives:

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Investigate if gender is a cause of drop out of Adult Literacy Programme (ALCs in Gombe state).
2. Identify if instructors competences is a cause of drop out of ALCs in Gombe state.
3. Investigate if financial constraints face by the learners cause dropout in literacy programme.

4. Hypotheses:

The hypotheses of this study are:

H_0 There is no significant relationship between gender roles and cases of dropout from Adult Literacy Programme in Gombe state.

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between instructors' competences and cases of Dropout of Adult Literacy Programme in Gombe state.

H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between learners' poverty level and cases of Dropout of Adult Literacy Programme in Gombe state.

5. Methodology

Survey design was used for conducting this study. Dropouts from adult literacy centers in the state in the year 2011 served as the population. They are 5,414 learners. Ten percent of the population was selected and studied. They were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique and simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire was designed in two sections: section A covered the bio data of the respondents while section B covered the variables under study. The sampled LGAs studied are Shongom, Yamaltu-Deba and Nafada local government areas. Twenty percent of the programme directly affected with cases of drop out were identified from which the 10percent total drop out were drawn and studied. The demographic composition of the respondents are 45 percent males and 55 percent females, the data collected was analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

From table 1 which tries to check if gender is a factor which forced them to drop out, on item one a mean of 4.60 of the score was obtained and a standard deviation of 0.52 was obtained. This implies that, gender purely is a factor contributing to drop out in Gombe state. The work load assign to males /females was investigated to see if it contributed to drop out among adult learners. Going by the scores obtained on item two of this sub-section of the questionnaire the mean was found to be 4.76 and the standard deviation was 0.47 this implies that, there is a significant relationship between work load and learners drop out among adult learners in Gombe state. Also time inconvenience as a factor contributing to learners drop out was investigated, the mean of the scores was found to be 4.71 and standard deviation at 0.46. This also implies that, there is a significant relationship between learners drop out and time schedule for the programme in Adult Literacy Programme in Gombe state.

From table 2, the teaching method in use by the instructors was asked if it was responsible for their drop out of Adult Literacy Programme (ALCs), a mean of the scores was computed and 4.78 was obtained and the standard deviation of 0.47. This implies that, respondents strongly agreed with that as a factor which contributed to their drop out of literacy class. The second item in this table is the instructors' incompetence viewed as a factor of drop out among Adult Literacy Programme a mean score of the respondent was obtained to be 4.74 and a standard deviation of 0.47 was obtained. This also implies that there is a relationship in the opinion of the respondents on teachers' incompetence as a factor which led to their drop out. Teacher's behaviour was investigated to see if it has a relationship to learners drop out. From the scores obtained a mean of the score was computed and found at 4.75 and standard deviation of the score was found to be 0.46. This implies that, respondents strongly agreed that instructors' behaviour related with their drop out of the literacy class.

From table three it can be seen that, the mean score of the scores for item one is 4.81 with a minimal deviation in the score of up to 0.4. This means that the respondents dropped due to inadequacy of instructional materials. On item 2 of the questionnaire, the mean of the scores of the respondents is 4.19 with a standard deviation valued at 0.16 this also implies that, the respondents did not get what they want so they dropped out of the class. In addition, on item three of this sub-section of the questionnaire, mean of the scores to that item was obtained at 4.45 and the standard deviation is 0.26. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between the learners drop out and quality of instructional materials in use among adult literacy programme in the state.

8. Discussions:

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between gender roles and cases of drop out Adult Literacy Programme in Gombe state.

The study found gender as causative factor of drop out among adult literacy learners in Gombe state, which agrees with the assertion made by UNFPA in Otive (2006) who said that (two-third) of the world illiterates are women and that majority of them are from developing countries. Explaining this, Ikolo (2010), stated that the gender digital divide was even manifested in the low number of female users of ICTs compared to men in medical students. That is, even in computer literacy learning among medical students in the south-south Nigeria varies between male and females in the states in the south-south Nigeria. It has been observed by scholars interested in gender that, a lot of women don't have access to education literacy inclusive perhaps the reason for the higher number of illiterates being females in Nigeria and the world at large. Records have it that there is unequal proportion in the composition of learners in formal schools, the situation which is not different with the non- formal sector. Many of the programme opened in Gombe state over the years were male literacy programme, the few programme were opened for the females hence fewer learners

enrolment and effect of unavoidable drop out among learners ended up fewer learners as said one of the adult literacy organizer (Yahaya 2011).

Ho2 there is no significant relationship between instructors' competences and cases of drop out of Adult Literacy Program in Gombe state.

The competence of adult literacy instructors' as a cause of drop out among adult literacy learners in Gombe state as investigated. The standard deviation obtained at the analysis was 0.47, 0.47 and 0.46 respectively for the three question items under this sub-section. This result suggested that instructors' in competence contributes to cases of drop out among adult learners in Gombe state. This agrees with the findings reported by Abadzi (2003) where she suggested that Adult literacy instruction must become much more efficient than it currently is. Adult literacy should experiment with methods based on scientific research and select those that can be viably disseminated to teachers (instructors). Dropout was estimated by the government at 10 percent. There is need for continuing education of the adult literacy instructors in both instructional strategies and classroom management; especially adults programme who are very sensitive to all responses by people around them due to their experiences and personality consciousness. Beside they are people of high placements in the society which should be reflected in the kind of treatment given them by the class/instructors. When this is not properly done adult learners are likely to drop out (Yahaya 2011). Base on some study of records it was also found that, it has been long that the state agency organized refresher and induction training for both the serving instructors and the newly employed instructors. These trainings are known to have given instructors skills which made them succeed in the previous efforts in fighting illiteracy in the state. It was further discovered that non-professionals are shouldered with the role of literacy delivery the task which is often ignorantly done to the detriment of the programme and consequently affects the overall goal of the programme. Also poor adult – student relationships within the schools (center) do influence drop out among students in secondary schools in Delta state, Nigeria. This is because man as a social creature needs cordial relationship among colleagues to stay together (www.ccsenet.org).

Ho3 there is no significant relationship between inadequacy of instructional materials level and cases of drop out of Adult Literacy Programme in Gombe state.

An investigation into the relationship between adequacy of instructional materials and dropout of adult literacy programme by Adult learners in Gombe state revealed that, the standard deviation value at 0.4, 0.4 and 0.51 was obtained. This means that, there is significant relationship between adult learners' drop out and adequacy of instruction materials, relevance of the materials and the quality of the materials in use in ALCs in the state. This finding agrees with that of findings of Yahaya (2011) who in her comparative study of two independent programme that the class supplied with the adequate resources had only 2 learners (ie 8percent) who dropped out but the other class out of the 25 enrolled, 15 (ie 60percent) dropped out of the class due to their inability to purchase learning materials. The current situation in inadequate funding of literacy education by the governments of the stage could have been the responsible factor for the increasing cases of drop out among adult learners in the state. This coupled with the non presentation certificates to graduates of adult literacy programme in the state. On many occasions sessions end with some number of students unable to read and write what they are expected to have covered in their curriculum, this is own to lack and inadequacy of instructional materials in the learning centers. This assertion is strengthened in the word of Otive (2006) who reported on similar trend in the formal school setting. Poor reading skills was reported by horizons.com in 2011 as a leading factor to drop out among learners

9. Conclusion:

In conclusion it was found that among other things that adult learners were found to have dropped out of the adult literacy programme not because they are not willing to continue learning the literacy skills. Rather, they did so because of some factors militate against their continuing attendance of the literacy class. Factors such as gender and gender role, time constraint contributed to Adult learners' drop out in Gombe state. Instructor's competence, teaching method and instructors' behaviour were contributing factors to adult learners' drop out. Inadequacy of instructional materials, un related nature of the instructional materials and poor quality of the instructional materials were factor which contributed to the drop out of the learners studied.

10. Suggestions:

The following suggestions are made in line with the findings of this study:

1. Government should establish more female adult literacy centers in various districts of the state to encourage "comfortable" learning for our women illiterates to promote social inclusion.

2. Government should fund the agency to train and re-train adult literacy workers (especially instructors) to ensure effective role performance in the stride towards eradicating illiteracy among the citizenry and minimize cases of drop out of adult literacy programme.
3. Capacity building to adult literacy instructors should be conducted to the adult literacy workers to ensure development of learner friendly learning materials so as to help sustain adult learners' interest in the class for completion.

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Yahaya, L. (2011). Adult literacy report Gombe state, Nigeria. Organisers' end of session report 2011. www.ccsenet.org/./10631 poor adult –student relationships within the center.

Appendix 1

Table 1: Gender as a factor for dropout

S/N	Item	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Total	\bar{X}	SD
1.	I dropped out on being a female/ male	333	200	0	9	0	542	4.60	0.52
2.	Work load related to my gender made me drop out.	423	110	0	9	0	542	4.76	0.47
3.	Time inconvenience made me drop out.	396	141	5	0	0	542	4.71	0.46

Source: Field work 2012

Table 2: Teacher Quality as a factor for drop out of literacy programme

S/ N	Item	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Total	\bar{X}	SD
1.	I hate the teaching method so I drop out.	428	110	0	4	0	542	4.78	0.47
2.	The instructor don't know the subject matter so i drop out.	399	143	0	0	0	542	4.74	0.47
3.	I dislike the instructors' behaviour so I drop out.	410	129	0	3	0	542	4.75	0.46

Source: Field work 2012

Table 3: Instructional Materials as a factor for learners' drop out.

S/ N	Item	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Total	\bar{X}	SD
1.	In adequacy of instructional materials made me drop out.	444	101	0	0	0	542	4.81	0.4
2.	What they teach us is not related to what i want to learn.	103	439	0	0	0	542	4.19	0.16
3.	Poor quality of instructional facilities in use made me drop out.	250	287	0	5	0	542	4.45	0.26

Source: Field work 2012.

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